

Opening Statement of Chairman Fred Upton
Communications and Technology Subcommittee Hearing
On “H.R. __, a Bill to Clarify NTIA and RUS Authority
to Return Reclaimed Stimulus Funds to the U.S. Treasury.”
(Remarks Prepared for Delivery)

I'd like to welcome Assistant Secretary Strickling and Administrator Adelstein to our second hearing on oversight of the broadband provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

In the current economic environment, oversight of this \$7 billion program becomes even more important, especially since 95 percent of the country already has access to broadband, according to the FCC's National Broadband Plan.

When we first considered draft legislation at our February hearing, the Commerce and Agriculture Department Inspectors General had some suggestions on how to improve oversight and clarify ambiguities in the law about what happens to reclaimed or unspent award money. Mr. Strickling and Mr. Adelstein, I thank you and your staff for your ongoing assistance in improving this bill.

I will also be interested to hear what is working well in the program, and what could be working better. All together, the agencies have made 553 awards valued at \$7 billion--approximately \$400 million of which has been spent. Thirteen awards have been returned, worth approximately \$80 million. I appreciate this opportunity to learn lessons for the future from the awards that are coming back and the program experience as a whole.

Thank you. I look forward to the testimony.

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